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Discourses of inclusion and exclusion in the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Portuguese Revolution

This article takes a discourse analytical approach to elements of the 40th commemoration of the Portuguese Revolution, focusing specifically on the absence of themes and participants by groups who were most directly involved in the Revolution, either as actors (the “Captains of Abril”), the *retornados* (Portuguese nationals “returning” to Portugal in the aftermath of the 1974 coup) and *retornados-emigrantes* (those who left Africa during this period but went on to live outside Portugal). The analyses center primarily on the speech by Portuguese President Cavaco Silva, given as the official opening of the 40th anniversary of the military coup of 25 April 1974, which brought the authoritarian regime of 48 years to an end. This examination, combined with other speeches of Cavaco Silva, newspaper reports, analyses of the integration of *retornados*, and a commemorative TV miniseries on the Revolution, provide the evidence for the argument that important voices of the Revolution were muted or silenced in the official commemoration of 2014. Finally, the relevance of actor-centered perspectives on commemoration is laid out for educators.

Keywords:

commemoration, retornados, Portuguese diaspora, Captains of April, emigrants, luso-tropicalism

1 Introduction

On April 25, 2014, Portugal commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Portuguese Revolution. For some, it was a time of remembering the end of dictatorship and isolation. For others, notably those who had lived in the former Lusophone African territories at the time, the commemoration revived recollections of the trauma and turmoil of the period. The estimate of the number of *retornados*, those returning to the Metropole from the soon-to-be-former Portuguese territories in Africa, is broad: 500,000, often quoted as the official statistic (e.g., Almeida 2014), to 1 million (Godim, 2013). The number of Portuguese who emigrated is no less impressive: between 1960 and 1975 approximately 1.5 million Portuguese left the country (Prof2000, n.d.). Portuguese Government statistics indicate official numbers for the 1960s at nearly 650,000, and numbers in the 1970s at approximately 393,000 (Secretário de Estado das Comunidades Portuguesas, 2013). It is impossible to say how many of the *retornados* emigrated, bypassing the authorities and thus not entered in the official record. By the 1990s, the office of the Foreign Ministry providing support to emigrants and to the Portuguese communities in the diaspora (*Instituto de Apoio à emigração às Comunidades Portuguesas*), estimated that 4 million Portuguese were living abroad, accounting for more than

a third of the nation’s population (Council of Europe 1994, p. 18).

Consequently, the commemorative events of 2014 were also a reminder of one of Portugal’s postcolonial challenges: What does it (now) mean to be Portuguese? What place do the *retornados* and Portuguese living in the diaspora play in the nation’s sense of self? This article examines discourses of inclusion and exclusion at commemorative events of the 40th anniversary of the Portuguese Revolution. The notion that anyone “need” be excluded brings to mind three questions one can pose about commemorative events generally: For *whom* is the commemorative event and *whose needs* does it serve? *How* should the event be commemorated? Whose are the *legitimate voices* and who “should” be silenced?

The discursive analysis of commemorative events has generated a lot of interest in the past couple of years. Recent studies have focused on constructions of memory (Alves et al. 2014; Duncan 2014; and Ümit Üngör 2014); the (re)construction of “truth” or “history” (Billig & Marinho 2014, as well as Hladki 2014); and Zuev & Virchow (2014) present a group of articles examining how participation in national events is an instance of identity performance. One paper in the collection, Leal (2014) contrasts Azorean vs. mainland Portuguese participation in Portuguese-centered events in Toronto, noting that commemoration in diasporic communities is not monolithic among people of the same national origin. Mininni, Manuti & Curigliano (2012) consider commemorative acts as “discursive resources of historical identity.” While each of these perspectives offers valuable insights to the analysis of commemorative events through the lens of its participants, this article examines the relative invisibility of both the principal actors of the Revolution as well as a sector of the population most affected by the Revolution itself at the time—those residing in one of Portugal’s overseas territories in Africa.

2 Background of the study

Initially, this was to have been a study comparing experiences, practices and memories of the 1974 revolution at three moments in time—the events of

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1974, the subsequent three years, and the approaching 40th anniversary of the Revolution.¹ Three demographic profiles were identified among participants aged 45 and above: those living in one of the former Portuguese overseas provinces in 1974 who now reside in Portugal (*retornados*), those living in Africa in 1974 who returned to Portugal but later emigrated (*retornados-emigrantes*), and those who have always lived within the geographic boundaries that currently define Portugal. Participants aged 44 and younger were divided into two categories—those who live in Portugal and those who lived abroad. As they did not personally experience the events of 1974, they were asked to reconstruct what they remembered others having told them about the period in question.

The total number of participants in the study, 54, was much smaller than anticipated, as the study was promoted in several Facebook groups reaching approximately 30,000 people, as well as forwarded through personal channels and a few blogs. In hindsight, the number of participants might have been higher if the study had been designated “Memories of the Portuguese Revolution” rather than “Memories and Commemoration of the 25th of April.” As few participants in the study engage in activities of commemoration on an annual basis, perhaps other potential participants felt that the questionnaire was not directed to them.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the study for its original purposes, a number of issues came to light in the responses of those who in 1974 lived in Africa and currently live in the diaspora to prompt me to refocus attention on the discursive practices surrounding the commemoration, the subject of this article. Participants were asked how long it took for them to feel their life had become “normalizada” (normal). Fully half of the 16 people in this category responded “Never”—their lives have never returned to their definition of normalcy, independently of their educational level, professional status or current place of residence. The second most frequent response was “10 years,” while the shortest recovery time, mentioned by a single participant, was “5 years.” Despite the lack of participation in commemorations of the Revolution, nearly all maintain their Portuguese citizenship travel to Portugal at least once per year, and decided to be included in this study.

The *retornados-emigrantes* experienced the revolution and its aftermath in a unique way. Theirs were the lives most affected by the coup, as they were forced to leave stable, middle-class lives for the insecurity of the Metropole and, later, further upheaval and adaptation as emigrants. On the 25th of April 1974, they witnessed the coup at a distance, both geographical and for many, temporal as well, as with no TV the news came by ham radio and word of mouth. Several informants said they only learned of the Revolution the following day. Most of the participants in the study left Africa in 1975 during the “hot summer,” the term for the period of greatest exodus of *retornados*. As a result, they had a front row seat in the aftermath of the coup, experiencing housing, job and food shortages, as well as discrimination, resentment, and a sudden loss of social status. They later

left Portugal, between 1975 and 1988, and currently live in Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Holland, New Zealand, the U.K., and the U.S.

Having decided to focus on the *retornados-emigrantes*, it may therefore seem a bit antithetical to focus on a commemorative event in which the population in question does not participate, but the data led me to pose a question similar to González-Espitia’s regarding the construction of national identity in the 19th century in the newly formed countries in Latin America: “What type of nation [here, commemorative event] arises when the memory is marked by catastrophe, shame, or destruction?” (2009, p. 35). These were certainly the by-products of the Revolution. While the term *retornado* was created in 1975 with the creation of the agency to help those “returning” to Portugal, the statistics are unclear as to the number of people leaving the African colonies already by June 1974 (Matos, 2010). Barreto (2002) claims that, in order to mask the instability caused by the massive flux of Portuguese to and from the Metropole, as well as from the colonies directly to other countries—estimated as 7% of the entire population in a single year—the Government was lax in collecting exact data on these numbers (Barreto, 2002, p. 8). Further complicating the situation, was the flexibility as to which groups would be counted as *retornados*. For Portuguese agencies, only those with family ties to Portugal would be given support through the IARN (Institute for the Support of Returning Nationals).

Taking a macroperspective to the events of 25 April 1974, three groups stand out: the military captains who carried out the coup; the *retornados*, whose lives were forever changed; and the emigrants, whose physical departure from the country was a relief to the country’s infrastructures and subsequent remittances provided economic relief to family members left behind. As a result, this article explores the degree to which the contributions and experiences of these groups were acknowledged, made visible in the official commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the revolution, in 2014. Would there be any acknowledgement of the roles they and others in similar situations played in the construction of a new national identity and the new democratic regime?

This article examines speeches made by President Cavaco Silva on 25 April 2014, with references to his speeches on 10 June 2013 and 2014, June 10th being the commemoration of the Day of Portugal, Camões and the Portuguese Communities. Similar discourses regarding the role Portuguese in the diaspora can and should play as citizens can also be found in the presentation of the *Conselho da Diáspora Portuguesa* (Portuguese Diaspora Council), created by Cavaco Silva in 2012. Supporting evidence is further found in the commemorative TV miniseries *Depois do Adeus*, which tracks the life of a *retornado* family from Angola’s path to integration in Portugal, newspaper articles on the aftermath of the Revolution and discussions of the role the Captains of April association should play in the commemoration ceremony.

3 Discourses and practices of inclusion and exclusion

Events were scheduled throughout 2014 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Revolution—lectures, debates, conferences, and expositions. However, a search of the terms “retornado,” “diaspora” and “emigrant” crossed with “25th of April,” Portuguese Revolution commemoration, and so forth, suggests that neither the *retornados* nor the emigrants were the central focus of any well-publicized event. From this evidence alone, it is impossible to know whether this was a result of a particular strategy or simply reflects a position that these groups are irrelevant. In the eyes of the sociologist Rui Pena Pires, writing for local papers such as *Jornal da Madeira* on April 24, 2014, the *retornados* are an “*assunto de memória*” (a “thing of the past”). To him they have become invisible, as their skills allowed them over time to move into positions of authority. His focus is clearly on professional integration, rather than emotional connection. This finding is in contrast to Machado’s (2011) work on the creation of memories and post-memories by children of *retornados*. His conclusion is that psychological integration has not taken place, that a sense of belonging in Portugal has not fully developed. The finding that the lives of so many of the participants have never become “normal” is in line with Machado’s.

Pires’ perspective, however, fits the national narrative that Portugal is at peace with itself and national unity and democracy are the law and spirit of the day. This is the thrust of most of Cavaco Silva’s official commemorative speech of 25 April 2014. Cavaco Silva was not the only speaker at the Parliament on the 25th of April. But as Portugal’s highest-ranking public official, it serves as the keystone official narrative of the event and therefore is the object of analysis here. Cavaco Silva refers to democracy (by noun, adjective or adverb) 25 times and liberty 7, while contrasting post-1974 Portugal with the dictatorship (mentioned 4 times). Although he alludes to the fact that other interpretations of the past exist, other views of history and of paths not taken, he makes no comment regarding the type of discord and places them in the framework of a successful democratic regime:

É legítimo contestar opções que se fizeram ao longo destes quarenta anos. Contudo, temos de ter presente uma realidade muito simples: só podemos contestar e criticar tais opções porque vivemos em liberdade e em democracia.

It’s legitimate to contest decisions which were made during these 40 years. However, we have to keep present in our minds a very simple reality: we can only contest and criticize such decisions because we live in liberty and under democracy [*translation mine*].

At the same time, he urges for continued education about the dictatorship, so that younger generations, who have not experienced the hardships of a dictatorial regime, will be aware of them.

One such contested decision involves the commemoration itself: the role that the “Captains of April” would play in the ceremony. The term “Captains of April” refers to the group of soldiers who planned the coup and were responsible for its success. The polemic was in

Parliament: should they be allowed a speaking role, or merely be silent witnesses to the event, serving as visual symbols of the Revolution? For Vasco Lourenço of the 25th of April Association, the decision would be determined by political expediency. He felt that there was fear that the Captains would speak against the government, pointing to its departure from the ideals of the Revolution. This fear was not entirely unfounded, given Lourenço’s position from the time the Pedro Passos Coelho became Prime Minister in 2011 (government took office in (The final decision was that would not be granted a voice, despite the urgings of former presidents Ramalho Eanes (*Jornal do Sol* 2014) and Mário Soares (*Diário de Notícias* 2014), who also cited political reasons for their exclusion: he referred to the government as “anti-25 de Abril,” as for three consecutive years the captains had not been allowed to participate actively (i.e., speak) during the official ceremony. As the Captains of April Association declined the invitation to serve merely as a visual reminder of the role of the military in the events of the 25th of April, they were excluded from the official ceremony. Instead, the association planned its own commemorative event in Largo do Carmo, near the military quarter to which Marcelo Caetano fled once the coup was under way. Among those participating in this “parallel” ceremony was Mário Soares.

In the official ceremony Cavaco Silva makes no mention of the Captains of April, the very elements that made possible the implantation of democracy at that moment in time. Instead, he says:

...devemos dirigir uma saudação especial às Forças Armadas, que, nas alturas decisivas da nossa História, sempre souberam estar ao serviço de Portugal e dos Portugueses.

...we should give a special greeting to the Armed Forces, which, in the decisive moments in our History, always knew how to provide service to Portugal and the Portuguese.

This statement, while not a lie, distorts the historical record. While the statement itself might be made by an official at any time and be considered true, in this context it is a clear reference to the military’s role in making democracy possible. While those knowledgeable of the events would be able to identify the distortion, younger members of the audience, as well as the international public, would not necessarily realize that he had effectively given credit to the military as a whole. In doing so he transformed the nature of the coup, giving it the status of an official military action sanctioned by the generals, as opposed to the operation which was clandestine both in terms of the Caetano government and the military itself. In this way, his apparent inclusionary discourse masks an exclusionary act.

Not only does Cavaco Silva disguise the prime actors of the coup, he also skirts the issue of those whose lives were so drastically altered through the turmoil of the times. At no times does he use the words *retornado*, *emigrante* or *África*, but there is a moment when it seems he is referring to *retornados*, as when he turns his attention to the past and declares, “We successfully integrated many thousands of Portuguese coming from the African territories that became independent.”¹¹ This



statement appears to reduce the hundreds of thousands of *retornados* to mere thousands. He continues: “Without traumas or complexes, we built a fraternal alliance with the new countries that affirms the value of ‘lusophony’ in the entire world [translation mine].ⁱⁱⁱ” At the end of the second sentence it becomes clear that he is referring to an influx of people of African descent post-independence, but for listeners who presumed from the first sentence that he was speaking of *retornados*, “without traumas or complexes” must have sounded as a dismissal of their feelings. In this way, while Cavaco Silva appears to have trivialized their experiences (cf. Todorov 2004), in reality he has diminished them to the point of invisibility, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Thus, the narrative Cavaco Silva promotes is one of Portugal welcoming its formerly far-flung citizens back into the fold in a nearly seamless process. We can easily extrapolate that the voices which must be silenced are those that promote a different picture of events.

In turning his attention to the future, Cavaco Silva refers to those in the “Diaspora” as “strategic assets” (*ativos estratégicos*), a business term often referring to inanimate objects essential to a company’s productivity, such as equipment, tools, patents, etc. (e.g., CRIE, n.d.). As he has revealed in his yearly speeches on the Day of Portugal, Camões and the Portuguese Communities (Oliveira 2013), he is unwavering in his focus on what the Diaspora can contribute to the Nation. Parenthetically, an argument could be made that by referring to emigrants as strategic assets his discursive strategy is similar to colonial powers discussing their resources in the far-flung reaches of their empire, but this is a topic for another article. Indeed, Cavaco Silva makes no mention to the role that massive emigration played in creating economic stability in Portugal through remittances (equivalent to 10% of Portugal’s Gross National Product in 1982, according to PORDATA), as well as easing the strain on the country’s infrastructures by leaving the country (see Telo, 1997, p. 161 for discussion of emigration as the most important factor in the democratization of Portuguese society).

Despite his inclusion of those “in the diaspora” late in the speech, 40 seconds into his 23,5 minute speech he states that “in all the Country, Portuguese are celebrating the 25th of April because it brought us liberty.” He does not say that Portuguese around the world are celebrating, despite the large number of celebrations held in Portuguese diasporic communities. At this moment, only those residing in the country are deemed relevant (i.e., discursively included). One can easily argue that this choice is natural, given that the events occurred on Portuguese soil and led to a democratic regime in this country. However, he is accustomed to referring to those in the diaspora as Portuguese, both in his 10 June speeches commemorating the Day of Portugal, Camões and the Portuguese Communities, as well as when speaking of the Portuguese Diaspora Council (Conselho da Diáspora Portuguesa), created by him in 2012 (see Oliveira 2013 for a broader discussion of his use of elite members of

the diaspora as strategic assets for the country), although he does not grant them the same status. In his speech of 10 June 2013 Cavaco Silva (Silva, 2013) makes a distinction between *portugueses na Pátria* (Portuguese at home) and *portugueses na diáspora* (Portuguese abroad), calling those in the diáspora to “do their part” in helping Portugal face the financial crisis, because “Portugal is doing its part” (*Portugal está a fazer a sua parte*). It is an example of cognitive dissonance to claim that those in the diaspora have obligations as Portuguese when help is needed, yet can be excluded when the country is celebrating. Based on this distinction as well as other evidence, Oliveira (2013, p. 70) hypothesizes that for Cavaco Silva, the “Portuguese at home” and the “Portuguese abroad” represent two levels of citizenship, with those in the diaspora taking second place.

Certainly the most prolonged attention to the *retornado* experience within the commemoration of the Revolution as a year-long mega-event was the television miniseries *Depois do Adeus* (“After the goodbye”), broadcast in 26 episodes by RTP (Rádio Televisão Portuguesa). *Depois do Adeus* is the name of the song that was Portugal’s entry in the Eurovision song contest of 1974, won by Abba in early April of that year. As *Depois do Adeus* was often heard on the radio, the planners of the coup decided that it should be played at a specific time on a radio station they would control to serve as the signal to the troops that the coup would take place. This miniseries, first broadcast in 2013 and rebroadcast in 2014, focuses on a Portuguese family living in Angola. The first episode, entitled “The End,” begins in mid-July 1975, the middle of the “hot summer.” A coup takes place in Angola that convinces the family to move to the Metropole.

The miniseries is described as “the true portrait of a period that was everything, except fiction! [translation mine]^{iv}.” While the series is anchored in reality through the use of archival footage, and addresses problems of finding employment, dealing with discrimination and local bureaucracies, within a mere 11 months the family finds stability. The final episode, taking place in July 1976, coincides with the Olympics. The last conversation is between the parents of the *retornado* family. Maria do Carmo says to her husband, “Our lives begin again today, Álvaro. Our home is here now.” He responds: “But Angola will always remain in our hearts.” At this moment the scene shifts to the Olympics and we watch the end of the 10.000 meter race, in which Carlos Lopes came in second place, giving Portugal its first Olympic medal. The final words of the series are those of the Portuguese announcer, translation mine: “All of us are rooting for and suffering with Carlos Lopes. This is also a victory for Portugal” (RTP, 2012).

By associating Portugal’s victory in the Olympics with the integration of a family of *retornados*, we are left with a narrative that the newly defined, smaller-sized Portugal has quickly absorbed the *retornados* and has unified around common goals and national identity, which is in line with Pires’ (2014) conclusion, discussed above. Statistics are lacking which would demonstrate the pro-

portion of *retornados* who were effectively assimilated after 11 months. However, data from the participants in this study, combined with interviews, conversations and observations personally conducted during my residence in Lisbon in 1977-78 suggest that four years after the Revolution there was still significant turmoil and distrust of the *retornados*.

4 Discussion and conclusions

Research on commemoration is naturally focused on those who participate in the events. McCrone & McPherson (2009), among others, view the commemoration of the home country's national days as a means of making a link between so-called "dislocated communities." Presumably, however, the desire to forge and strengthen that link is based on a sense of shared background (see, for example, Morawska, 2011). In the case of *retornados* who had never resided outside Africa before the Revolution, their shared space, or home, is not Portugal, but rather Africa. If their stories are not a part of Portugal's national narrative—if their experiences are not officially celebrated in Portugal, why would they wish to commemorate the date in their adopted country? After all, the narratives of their personal trajectories and experiences function as "counter-memories" (cf. Hladki, 2014), or alternative readings of history. Their narratives evoke several controversial aspects of Portugal's still recent past: Empire and the Colonial Wars, the lack of infrastructures in the Metropole, resentment towards the *retornados*, and so forth. Counter-memories are a disruption to the process Ümit Üngör refers to as "fine-tuning national memories" and "muting" the past (2014, p. 154).

The idea that history will be fine-tuned and the sharp lines of its past "muted" is a partial answer to the question adapted from González-Espitia, "What type of commemoration arises when the memory is marked by catastrophe, shame, or destruction?" One way to move forward is to either ignore the most turbulent part of the past or to trivialize its importance, to avoid giving voices to counter-memories and counter-narratives—to weave a narrative which shows democracy as a product, not a process. In this case, outside elements "must" be quickly assimilated into the whole. Each time an event is commemorated, there is a new opportunity to revisit the event and emphasize different aspects, revive old memories or create new ones. Soutelo (2009) analyzes revisionism of the 25th of April during the time when Cavaco Silva was Prime Minister (1985-95). Ribeiro (2011) and Billig & Marinho (2014) examine the (unsuccessful) efforts made by the government on the 30th anniversary of the Portuguese Revolution (2004) to change the popular slogan "25 de abril é revolução" to "25 de abril é evolução." In 2014, political actions taken with regards to the organization of the official ceremony served to silence the voices of those whose memories, trajectories and actions at the time do not fit the harmonious narrative created in 2014.

The discourse of unity and integration has been a feature of Portuguese self-understanding, i.e., national

identity construction, for decades. It is found in the ideas of luso-tropicalism—a view developed by Freyre (1933) throughout *Casa Grande e Senzala (The Masters and the Slaves)*—that the Portuguese were better colonizers, as they were more tolerant than other colonizing powers, more able to mesh their values than others, more willing to mix their blood. Over time this idea has been expanded to refer to the ability of the Portuguese to become well-integrated and successful when abroad (Silva, 2013), as well as a firmly held belief that they are tolerant to foreigners living in Portugal (Vala, Lopes & Lima, 2008). Thus, Cavaco Silva's use of the word "integration" when speaking of the Africans who went to Portugal after their country's independence fits into Portugal's self-image in the world. However, Vala, Lopes & Lima (2008) demonstrate that while luso-tropicalism has had an effect on Portugal's self-image and self-understanding, and serves to promote a public "anti-prejudice norm" (2008, p. 291), subtle prejudice, racism and discrimination continue to exist (see also Oliveira [2011] on the reception of Pakistani immigrants in Portugal). In Cavaco Silva's speech a unified message is accomplished through selective discursive strategies by effectively excluding the groups whose memories and experiences would provide or suggest a counter-narrative. This exclusion is masked, in some cases, however, by discourse which is apparently inclusive, as in the case of mentioning the Armed Forces, but not acknowledging the specific soldiers and actions that the commemorative event is ostensibly being celebrated.

In her 2009 article "Negotiating a national memory: the British Empire & Commonwealth Museum," McLeod refers to the museum as an "ideal example of a space in which a nation can be seen to be actively negotiating its historicized identity" (2009, p. 157), and notes that one of the museum's greatest challenges is dealing with the inherent ambiguities and contradictions in the history of the Empire (2009, p. 158). I would argue that the *retornados* are the embodiment of such contradictions and ambiguities of the Portuguese Empire, that the lack of enthusiasm for commemorating the 25th of April is easily understood, as is the invisibility of the *retornados* and the emigrants in the national commemoration of the 25th of April. This is not to say that the *retornados* in the diaspora are necessarily disconnected from Portugal. The participants not only keep their Portuguese documents current and visit Portugal at least once per year, but they participate in Facebook groups that highlight some aspect of their Portuguese experience, although that experience may be rooted in their time in Africa: communities where they lived or schools they attended. The fact that they were willing to participate in the study is an indication of some degree of belonging to the larger community, and we can argue as well that it serves as a performance of their identity as Portuguese. But, for the *retornados-emigrantes*, the Revolution brought an end to a way of life that was comfortable and initiated a period of turmoil that for some continues until this day.

Considering again the commemoration of the Revolution as a celebration of national identity, McLeod's

reference to a space (in our discussion, a moment) “in which a nation can be seen to be actively negotiating its historicized identity” is highly pertinent. Each year the country has the option to determine anew the voices to be heard or silenced in order to promote the narrative which the government and participants wish to promote. For the 40th anniversary, the experiences of the *retornados* (those currently residing in Portugal) were presented as evidence of successful reintegration into Portuguese society, while the *retornados-emigrantes*, at least for Cavaco Silva, fell into one of two categories: the retired or the “strategic assets” which may still be of service to the Nation.

In the introduction to this article, several questions were raised regarding the nature of being Portuguese, the place that *retornados* and Portuguese in the diaspora play in the nation’s sense of self, the role of commemoration and the voices to be considered legitimate. While complete answers to these questions fall outside the scope of this article, the analyses presented here suggest some possible answers and avenues for additional study. From this brief examination of events, conducted primarily through the prism of the *retornados-emigrantes*, we can suggest that a national commemoration such as the one analyzed here can serve several purposes, but the official commemoration is for the dominant political party, which promotes its version of reality as the “legitimate” or, perhaps more accurately, the “legitimized” voice of history. These same authorities likewise determine the voices to be silenced, or de-legitimized. It is through this process that the arbiters will determine the groups and individuals who will be silenced, the issues which will not be addressed, the stories that will remain or become untold. In 2014, the stories of the *retornados*, the *retornados-emigrantes*, and the Captains of April, while not completely silenced, were an insignificant part of the master-narrative of the Portuguese Revolution presented by the country’s president.

5 Considerations for educators

One of the ongoing tensions within sociology involves the weight given to individual vs. holistic explanations for the understanding of social behavior and events. Actor-centered sociology occupies an intermediate position between these two poles, providing a compromise between “mechanistic” views of the individual (rational) actor (e.g., Adi, Amaeski & Nnodim, 2007) and holistic perspectives in which the actions of the individual actor need not be mentioned in the analysis (see Zahle & Collin, 2014 for a current presentation of the debate between various approaches along the continuum between these two poles, and Little, 2012 for a short presentation on actor-centered sociology). In this section, dedicated to educators working with commemorative events, we will present the rationale for this focus.

According to Little (2014), three considerations in actor-centered sociology are prime: a) that the role that individual actors play in constituting society must be

recognized; b) that broader social explanations must be consistent with the “activities and interactions of individual actors” (referred to as “microfoundations”); and c) that among the individual actors meriting research attention are “ordinary persons.”

Throughout this article we have argued that, through actions and discursive practices, relevant voices of the Portuguese Revolution were muted or silenced at the official commemorative ceremony. We referred to the creation of a master-narrative for the commemoration and, by extension, for current official memories of the event being commemorated. As a result, certain relevant actors of the Revolution (e.g., the Captains of April) were excluded from the ceremony, as they would be allowed to be seen yet not heard. Instead, a narrative was created that might convince casual listeners that the military as a whole was responsible for the Revolution, and mere thousands of people from Africa were assimilated into Portugal (Continent and Adjacent Islands), rather than the half to one-million people who left the former African colonies.

We attributed the actions on the part of Government officials to a desire to minimize the effect of counter-memories and personal trajectories that run counter to the master-narrative that the Government wished to create. We brought into the discussion some of the stories of the *retornados* and *retornados-emigrantes*; we examined official discourses of the President of the Republic; and we noted the contributions of former Presidents who urged the inclusion of the Captains of April—politicians who were active at the time of the Revolution and are now viewed as Elder Statesmen. Our focus on individual narratives and discourses is an acknowledgement that actor-centered approaches have a valuable role to play in understanding complex social phenomena and display the ways that both “ordinary” and well-connected individuals have roles in the constitution of social events.

The fact that master-narratives can be created that serve to diminish the voices of “others” is a reminder that commemorative events serve as ideological tools for those in power. It was to the Government’s advantage to promote the idea that the word *retornado* need no longer exist, because “all” have been integrated. To cease using the word is to ignore the reality that well over a half million Portuguese encountered. It is by actively seeking these voices and including them within the scope of the communicative event that the nuanced reality of the event, in this case the Revolution, is preserved. Indeed, without these counter-memories, the adage that history is written by the conquerors becomes an easy answer for justifying the silencing the discordant voices of the “others.”

Beyond context and nuance, what do these voices “add” to the study of the commemorative event? They provide immediacy, poignancy and authenticity, as well as a small measure of insurance that their voices will be woven into the “permanent” history of the event. The importance of a focus on voices can be seen in the 2015 Memorial Day digital commemorative exhibit of the



Holocaust Educational Trust, called “70 Voices: Victims, perpetrators, bystanders.” While Maws (2015) focuses on the dynamic use of smartphones and tablets as an integral part of the commemoration, and a way of keeping those voices vibrant, we find the focus on multiple voices creates a polyphonic sense of the period, which is equally important as the technology. More specifically this exhibit highlights how we come to a greater understanding of the “whole” through the presentation of the views of individuals participating in and/or witnessing the events of the time.

Broadly speaking, commemorative events can be divided into two categories—events we wish to celebrate or remember (e.g., the end of dictatorial regimes), and those we do not wish to forget (e.g., the Holocaust). One may wonder whether these types of commemoration should be handled differently by educators. On a superficial level, it may seem that the analysis of events considered incontestably celebratory (e.g., Independence Day), need not incorporate individual voices beyond the identification of “heroes.” However, commemorative events mark *changes in the status quo*. For this reason, no matter how positive the event is presumed to be, there are always counter-voices to be heard and understood, as we have shown with the commemoration of the Portuguese Revolution. It is with the fuller picture that we understand better not only the events of the time, but some of the constraints on full participation in the commemoration itself, as well.

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Endnotes:

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ⁱⁱ Integrámos com sucesso os muitos milhares de Portugueses vindos dos territórios africanos que se tornaram independentes.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sem traumas nem complexos, construímos com os novos países uma aliança fraterna, que afirma o valor da lusofonia no mundo inteiro.

^{iv} Original text: Depois do Adeus - Uma parte da história que muitos portugueses desconhecem - Um outro lado do pós-25 de Abril e a vida dos retornados na nova série de época da RTP. "Depois do Adeus" o retrato fiel de uma época que foi tudo, menos ficção!

